AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A method of heat-shrinking sleeves made from a film of heat-shrink plastics material ~~and engaged individually on articles such as bottles~~, the method comprising ~~the following successive steps~~:

~~a)~~ placing ~~a single~~ an article on a ~~moving~~ support configured for movement at one or more travel speeds, a heat-shrinking sleeve being engaged on ~~said~~ the article;

~~b)~~ moving the support at a first travel speed to transfer ~~transferring~~ the article together with ~~its~~ the sleeve into a pre-heater chamber ~~at a controlled~~ having a first temperature range; ~~, and~~

maintaining ~~said~~ the article in ~~said~~ the pre-heater chamber for a predetermined time ~~duration so as to prepare the film constituting the sleeve in an optimum manner for subsequently shrinking the sleeve onto the article~~;

~~c)~~ moving the support vertically at a second travel speed to pass ~~passing~~ the article together with ~~it's~~ the sleeve ~~at a controlled speed through~~ from the pre-heater chamber to a shrinkage chamber ~~at a controlled~~ having a second temperature range, the shrinkage chamber being adjacent to the pre-heater chamber, thereby causing the sleeve to shrink onto the article; and

~~d)~~ removing the article coated in its shrunk-on sleeve from the support.

2. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 1, further comprising controlling ~~wherein the~~ a set of parameters ~~of~~ including at least one of the first and second temperature ranges, at least one of the first and second travel ~~speed~~ speeds of the support, and the time ~~are controlled~~ as a function of the article ~~in question~~ and of the film constituting the sleeve ~~in question~~.

3. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 2, wherein the set of parameters are controlled by a programmable controller ~~governing the sequences of operations implemented in said method~~.

4. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 1, wherein the ~~heating obtained~~ temperature range in the pre-heater chamber is obtained by the effect of radiation.

5. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 1, further comprising blowing and diffusing hot air into ~~wherein the temperature that exists inside~~ the shrinkage chamber ~~is~~ to obtain the second temperature range ~~obtained by blowing in hot air and by diffusing the blown in air~~.

6. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 5, further comprising using ~~wherein the~~ air exiting ~~blown into~~ the shrinkage chamber ~~is~~ to maintain ~~also made use of periodically for maintaining~~ the ~~desired~~ first temperature range inside the pre-heater chamber.

7. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 1, wherein ~~the movement of the~~ moving the support ~~while transferring~~ to transfer the article into the pre-heater chamber and ~~while causing said~~ moving the support to pass the article ~~to pass~~ through the shrinkage chamber takes place along a single vertical axis ~~direction~~.

8. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 7, further comprising revolving ~~wherein~~ the support ~~is caused to revolve~~ at a controlled rotational speed about ~~a~~ the vertical axis both before and during the passage of the article together with its sleeve through the shrinkage chamber.

9. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 7, wherein at least one of the first travel speed and the second travel speed vary ~~the moving support is caused to move axially at varying speed~~ in order to optimize the duration of a complete cycle.

10. (Currently Amended) A heat-shrink machine for heat-shrinking sleeves made from a film of heat-shrink plastic material onto an article ~~implementing a method according to claim 1~~, the machine comprising:

[-] a stationary machine structure;

a shrinkage chamber having a temperature range, the shrinkage chamber being mounted to the stationary machine structure;

a pre-heater chamber surmounting the shrinkage chamber;

[-] an article support mounted to move at a travel speed relative to the stationary structure along a vertical ~~central~~ axis between a low position for installing or removing ~~an~~ the article, and a high position in which the article is fully contained in ~~a~~ the pre-heater chamber for a time ~~surmounting a shrinkage chamber~~; and

[-] a controller to control ~~governing~~ the ~~parameters of~~ temperature range of the shrinkage chamber, the travel speed of the support, and the ~~time during the sequences of operations of the method~~.

11. (Currently Amended) A machine according to claim 10, wherein the article support is configured to revolve ~~mounted to be capable also of revolving~~ about ~~its own central~~ the vertical axis.

12. (Currently Amended) A machine according to claim 10, wherein the article support is arranged to center the ~~supported~~ article on the vertical ~~central~~ axis, and ~~possibly also~~ to protect all or part of ~~the~~ a bottom zone of ~~said~~ the article.

13. (Currently Amended) A machine according to claim 10, wherein the pre-heater chamber includes ~~is constituted by~~ a radiant chimney carried by the shrinkage chamber and centered on the vertical ~~central~~ axis of the article support.

14. (Currently Amended) A machine according to claim 13, wherein the radiant chimney has at least one of a ~~is of~~ variable wall thickness and~~/or~~ a variable cross-section ~~in the event of there being significantly different shrinkage percentages between bottom and top zones of the sleeve to be shrunk onto the article~~.

15. (Currently Amended) A machine according to claim 10, wherein the shrinkage chamber is annular in structure, and is centered on the vertical ~~central~~ axis of the article support.

16. (Currently Amended) A machine according to claim 15, wherein the annular shrinkage chamber receives blown-in air from ~~is connected via a tube to~~ a hot air blower assembly, the shrinkage chamber including ~~and includes~~

components ~~serving~~ to diffuse the blown-in air and ~~, said chamber having~~ a cylindrical inside wall presenting at least one slot for delivering the diffused hot air.

17. (Currently Amended) A machine according to claim 16, wherein the inside wall of the annular shrinkage chamber presents a plurality of slots which are inclined relative to the horizontal.

18. (Currently Amended) A machine according to claim 16, wherein the components for diffusing the blown-in air include ~~are constituted by~~ strips of metal wool.

19. (Currently Amended) A machine according to claim 16, including an elevator secured ~~firstly~~ to the article support which is mounted to be capable also of revolving about its own central vertical axis[,] and ~~secondly~~ to a first motor for causing ~~said~~ the article support to revolve at a rotational speed around the vertical axis, ~~together with~~ and a second motor actuating ~~said~~ the elevator in order to cause the article support to move vertically axially, and wherein the controller of ~~said~~ the machine is connected to ~~said two~~ the first and second motors and to the hot air blower assembly associated with the annular shrinkage chamber in order to govern the ~~various parameters of~~ temperature range of the shrinkage chamber, the travel speed of the support along the vertical axis, the rotational speed of the support around the vertical axis[,] and the time.

20. (Currently Amended) A machine according to claim 19, wherein the controller is programmed as a function ~~programmable specifically to take~~

~~account~~ of the dimensions of the article, ~~in question and~~ the temperature of ~~said~~ the article when ~~it is put into place in said machine~~ placed on the support, and ~~also to take account of~~ the thickness and the ~~nature~~ material of the film constituting the sleeve ~~in question~~.

21. (Currently Amended) A machine according to claim 10, including a protective cover with a window enabling the article to be ~~put into place~~ placed on and removed manually from the support, the protective cover reducing a ~~without any~~ risk of an operator touching hot parts of ~~said~~ the machine.